

But there was again another age which deliberately, and without any sense of absurdity, regarded the acquisition of a Latin style as the main end of life. And, again I ask, what was the result? "It was," as Bacon says, "that men began to hunt more after words than after matter," falling into a vanity of which Pygmalion's frenzy is a good emblem. "But the excess of this," continues Bacon, in words to which I ask the earnest attention of our University authorities, "is so justly contemptible, that as Hercules, when he saw the image of Adonis, Venus's minion, in a temple, said in disdain, '*Nil sacri es*;' so there is none of Hercules's followers in learning, that is the more severe and laborious sort of inquirers into truth, but will despise those delicacies and affectations as indeed capable of no divineness."

Once more, and lastly—to what country does the reader suppose that we must look for the greatest outburst of fecundity and facility in the production of Latin Verse? Few, I suspect, would be likely to guess that the palm must undoubtedly be given to Portugal. Yet so it is. Not even the "*Musæ Etonenses*," supplemented by all the other *nugæ canoræ* of the British Muse, can pretend to equal in bulk and magnificence the seven quarto volumes, published in Lisbon in 1745, which contain the mouldering remains of no less than fifty-nine illustrious Lusitanian poets! Alas that so many of these "illustrious" should be consigned to oblivion in the obscure limbo of a "corpus;" alas that the world of "taste" and "style" should be unconscious of what it owes to Mendez Vasconcellos, or to Diego Fayra de Andrada; alas that in its Philistine ingratitude it should have forgotten Figueira Duram, who was an epic poet at sixteen, and who improvised before his examiners "The Temple of Eternity;" or F. de Macedo, who tells us in his "*Myrothecium Morale*" that he had written 2,600 epic poems, 110 odes, 4,000 epigrams, 4 Latin comedies, and 150,000 impromptu Latin verses! How much was the world better for these Goliaths among modern Latin poets? And what benefit accrued to Portugal from its not very noble army of imitative versifiers? Why, a gain the *very reverse* of that which the arguments of our classical composers would have led us to expect, viz. a literature the poorest and the most jejune of any country in Europe! Their Latin Verse-writing was, it appears, as useless and deceptive as the iridescence on the surface of a very shallow and a very stagnant pool. It was (if I may borrow an expression from Guibert, the good and eminent Abbot of Nogent sous Coucy, who in his autobiography has bewailed the manner in which he was led astray in his youth by the temptations incident to the study of Latin Verse) a "ridiculous vanity."

I do not for a moment mean to say that our age has run to the same ridiculous excess. Thank God, our modern education has involved many better and richer elements than this. But I do say that our extensive Latin Verse system is a useless and unfortunate relic of training of this sort. And training of this sort, is let us hope, irrevocably doomed. Those who now cling to it will sooner or later be forced to give it up. And if those of us who have given it up make some mistakes in our early attempts to substitute a better training in its place, we may at least console ourselves with the thought that, unless we are guilty of deliberate treachery, it is impossible for us to reproduce a system equally pernicious and equally infructuous. The social forces are all arrayed on our side. In this age, more perhaps than in any other, we have a right to demand as an essential element in the education of our youth something broader, deeper, more human, more useful, less selfish, less exclusive. We require the knowledge of *things* and not of *words*; of truths which great men have to tell us, and not of the tricks or individualities of their style; of that which shall add to the treasures of human knowledge, not of that which shall flatter its fastidiousness by frivolous attempts at reproducing its past elegancies of speech; of that which is best for human souls, and which shall make them greater, wiser, better; not of that which is idly supposed to make them more tasteful, and refined.—Very soon we shall have seen and heard the last of this card-

castle-building upon sand; let us strive in all earnest and thoughtful faith to rebuild, not on such weak foundations, but with broad bases and on the living rock, some great and solid structure of enduring masonry, which shall be hereafter among those things which cannot be shaken and shall remain.

### Precepts for Youth.

As, in the succession of the seasons, each, by the invariable laws of Nature, affects the productions of what is next in course; so, in human life, every period of our age, according as it is well or ill spent, influences the happiness of that which is to follow. Virtuous youth gradually brings forward accomplished and flourishing manhood; and such manhood passes of itself, without uneasiness, into respectable and tranquil old age. But when nature is turned out of its regular course, disorder takes place in the moral just as in the vegetable world. If the spring put forth no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit. So, if youth be trifled away without improvement, manhood will be contemptible, and old age miserable. If the beginnings of life have been "vanity," its latter end can be no other than "vexation of spirit."

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The self-conceit of the young is the great source of those dangers to which they are exposed; and it is peculiarly unfortunate, that the age which stands most in need of the counsel of the wise should be the most prone to contemn it. Confident in the opinions which they adopt, and in the measures which they pursue, they seem as if they understood Solomon to say, not, "Who knoweth," but, Who is ignorant of, "what is good for man all they days of his life?" The bliss to be aimed at is, in their opinion, fully apparent. It is not the danger of mistake, but the failure of success, which they dread. Activity to seize, not sagacity to discern, is the only requisite which they value.—How long shall it be, ere the fate of your predecessors in the same course teach you wisdom? How long shall the experience of all ages continue to lift its voice to you in vain? Beholding the ocean on which you are embarked covered with wrecks, are not those fatal signals sufficient to admonish you of the hidden rock? If, in paradise itself, there was a tree which bore fruit fair to the eye, but mortal in its effects, how much more, in this fallen state, may such deceiving appearances be expected to abound! The whole state of nature is now become a scene of delusion to the sensual mind. Hardly any thing is what it appears to be. And what flatters most is always farthest from reality. There are voices which sing around you, but whose strains allure to ruin. There is a banquet spread, where poison is in every dish. There is a couch invites you to repose; but to slumber upon it is death. In such a situation, "be not high-minded, but fear." Let sobriety temper your unwary ardour. Let wisdom be the offspring of reflection now, rather than the fruit of bitter experience hereafter.

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Of all the follies incident to youth, there are none which either deform its present appearance, or blast the prospect of its future prosperity, more than self-conceit, presumption, and obstinacy. By checking its natural progress in improvement, they fix it in long immaturity; and frequently produce mischiefs, which can never be repaired. Yet these are vices too commonly found among the young. Big with enterprise, and elated by hope, they resolve to trust for success to none but themselves. Full of their own abilities, they deride the admonitions which are given them by their friends, as the timorous suggestions of age. Too wise to learn, too impatient to deliberate, too forward to be restrained, they plunge, with precipitant indiscretion, into the midst of all the dangers with which life abounds. "Seest thou a young man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

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In order to render yourselves amiable in society, correct every